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## Our message for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the IAEG SDG Indicators and our opinions on the draft global indicator framework for Agenda 2030

Dear colleagues,

Please find enclosed our opinions regarding the suggested indicators and proposals made by the other states, UN institutions and other international organizations. To complement the collection of our individual remarks we would like to make some suggestions on the process itself and provide some overarching comments and issues for discussion. In general, we welcome your suggestion grouping the discussion to mainly tackle the problematic issues.

The number of targets is quite high and they are often very specific. Thus, most of the suggested indicators pointing at the targets are very specific as well. When going through the list of indicators we recognized that some already well-established, suitable, easy to understand and gain indicators which are already used for the purpose of monitoring sustainable development were missing. That is why we would again like to push the idea forward, establishing a selected set of indicators linked to the goals. We kindly ask to offer room for this issue to be discussed during the Bangkok meeting and call for putting this on the meeting's agenda.

The remaining time until the IAEG has to provide its suggestion is heavily limited. Thus, we recommend to concentrate on the selection of the indicators first. Discussions on the definition of the indicators in detail and on disaggregations should start immediately after the group agreed on a list of indicators. To keep the list of indicators as short as possible, identifying interlinkages across targets and indicators is essential. As soon as a provisional list of indicators is agreed on, we recommend analysing possible inter-linkages, whether or not an already selected indicator could also serve another target to replace or supplement the indicator stated there. This process should be finished within or directly after the Bangkok meeting.

Disaggregation is a key element of the Agenda 2030, it is crucial for analytical purposes, to address inequalities and thus to fulfil the "leave no one behind" idea. We should not lose this out of sight. The decisions on disaggregations in concrete require a careful preparation and we should not rush into it. To have a solid footing for disaggregation, we believe that we should first dedicate our time and resources during the Bangkok meeting to the establishment of a reasonable indicator framework that meets the pure requirement of the targets. Possible disaggregations should – where they are not explicitly asked by the target – be topic of an immediate follow-up process on further developing the indicator set. We should carefully determine the level of disaggregation indicator by indicator, depending on the political needs and the capacities available.

Expecting the IAEG sharing our opinion we ask the group setting up a road map for deciding on disaggregations. A reasonable suggestion for disaggregations should be made available before March 2016.

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Concerning the questionnaire, we would first like to point out that in order to make the meeting in Bangkok as efficient as possible, we stated to have strong concerns on the proposals for a given indicator (Q3) if – and only if – we consider a plenary discussion as an essential requirement for the development of the indicator. At the same time, we want to stress the importance of all the comments we made in the questionnaire. In particular, in cases we did not express strong concerns and asked for discussion during the Bangkok meeting (Q3) our remarks on suggested modifications, replacements and additional proposals (Q1 and Q2) should not be neglected during the development of a sound indicator system.

For several indicators we have identified the need for a more clear and unambiguous definition of the terms used in the description of the indicator. We have indicated this in the questionnaire. However we believe that simple issues of definition need not necessarily be discussed during the meeting but can be coordinated more effectively in writing. We should dedicate the limited time we have in Bangkok to more critical issues.

Selected targets have shown to be quite difficult to be adequately reflected by indicators. This refers to all targets aiming at measuring illegal activities and most targets dealing with policies and means of implementation (Goals 16, 17 and targets marked with a, b, etc.). Another issue are targets asking for sustainability which is often not clearly reflected by the suggested indicators.

We would like to express our concerns about the fact that several targets are currently planned to be monitored by an indicator trying to measure the prevalence of some kind of illegal activity. This entails severe difficulties as the reliability of the results is extremely doubtful. To attain a reliable indicator set, we should investigate whether or not the targets in question can be monitored by alternative indicators. In our opinion, a discussion on this issue is necessary during the Bangkok meeting.

A similar problem applies to several targets dealing with policies and means of implementation: The implementation of specific policies or strategies is vital for sustainable development but very difficult to measure by indicators. Where possible, we should prefer a measurement in monetary terms to an indicator that just counts the number of countries which have implemented certain policy programmes. The latter can only be a second-best solution, or an option, in case the target explicitly asks for it. We believe that in general we should discuss alternative ways other than indicators reporting on the targets in question.

It should be ensured that the indicator set receives a final editing to ensure a uniform phraseology and syntax as far as possible. We support the idea, that even after the formal approval of the indicators further improvements and adjustments are possible in line with the development of the statistical system in future.

We believe that the outcome of the Bangkok meeting will give a good overview on the different opinions and hopefully a widely accepted list to be used as starting point for the measurement process.

Best wishes,  
Sven